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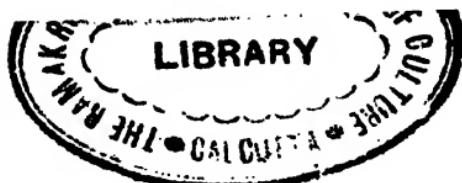
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Wisdom of the East Series

ED. BY

RANMER-BYNG

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LOTUSES OF THE MAHĀYĀNA

(A few torn leaves pages 16 to 18)
The Cloud-Messenger by Charles Keown



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INTRODUCTION *"Lotuses of the Mahāyāna".*

THE followers of Sākyamuni began, soon after his death in 483 B.C., to differ both as to his person and as to some of his teachings. But these differences did not greatly divide them until about the beginning of the Christian Era, when a liberal movement set in and became strong enough to form a separate and very vigorous sect. Criticising the more austere schools as a Narrow Way, (Hinayāna), which might lead a few detached and rather inhuman saints to the goal of Nirvāna, these liberals called their own way Mahāyāna, or the Great Way which leads many to salvation. This liberal Buddhism is stigmatised alike by the monks of Ceylon and Burma, and by many of their Western students, as an illegitimate development: it is quite different, they argue, from the Dhamma of Sākyamuni. He taught men to rely upon their own efforts, and they make much of faith in divine beings; he taught the ideal of the Arhat, or recluse, and they criticise this as selfish, and set up in its place that of the Bodhisattva, who will not rest until he has brought many to salvation. To these criticisms the

champions of Mahāyāna reply that it is a mark of the living organism to develop, that the Orthodox may perhaps claim to keep the letter of the Dhamma but that they have certainly lost its spirit, and that their rigidity is a sign of atrophy. The student who is not a Buddhist will leave these two great schools to settle this dispute for themselves. Yet, if he is a sympathetic student, he may see truth in both positions. Even if the Mahāyāna is very different from the moral reform movement which swept India in the sixth century before Christ, its meaning and motive-power lay chiefly in the admirable figure of Sākyamuni, and he was himself Bodhisattva as well as Arhat. Moreover, he claimed an authority for his teaching and a faith in it which, even in his own lifetime, began to cling with the tendrils of human affection and loyalty to his person. There are, in a word, seeds in early Buddhism which developed by a natural growth into the fine flower of the Mahāyāna (Part I). Thus we find a characteristic utterance of the Pāli books, "Whoso seeth the Dhamma seeth Me," developing quite naturally into the semi-docetism of the Mahāyāna :

Whoso saw My mortal form,
Whoso heard My spoken word—
Hoard and saw not—in the Norm
See the Body of the Lord.¹

Another natural development was to relate the

¹ *Vajrācchedikā Sūtra* (third century A.D.)

historic Sākyamuni to the Eternal, and to build up an elaborate Buddhology. The great man condemns the world to the task of explaining him. In the same way the emphasis placed by Sākyamuni upon the fleeting and universal nature of worldly possessions—"All is transient and empty of abiding worth"—develops almost inevitably into a transcendentalism which is of the essence of the Mahāyāna :

Thus shall yo think of all this fleeting world :
 A star at dawn, a bubble on a stream,
 A flash of lightning on a summer cloud,
 A flickering lamp, a phantom and a dream.¹

This transcendentalism in turn led to nihilistic views : "All is empty not only of real worth, not only of abiding reality, but of any reality whatsoever."

A flower in air,
 A hornèd hare,
 A sculptured maid with child :
 False fancies all and figments wild
 Of the untutored common mind
 Which seeketh still a self to find. . . .
 Infatuate they transmigrate,
 Whom still their own delusion blinds
 And to the wheel of Karma binds.²

However they may differ in philosophical interpretation, all those schools claim the Master's authority and the goal remains the same for

¹ *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (second century A.D.).

² *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* (fourth century A.D.).

all. "One thing only . . . the uprooting of sorrow . . . Nirvāna," said Sākyamuni: and all Buddhists are agreed that this is the essence of Buddhism. To this end even nihilism is made to contribute:

If I that sing am nothing, nothing they
I see around me—men and things—then pray
How shall I fail in mind to press
To that One Goal of Nothingness ?

sings Akazome Emon, a Japanese poet.

Even extreme forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism claim, then, to be legitimate: and all claim our attention. The true nature of a religion is best understood by studying its complex developments as well as its simpler beginnings, and examples will be found of these varying philosophical schools in Nos. VI, IX, XIX, XX, XXI.

Moreover, it is by no means clear that we get the pure essence of what Sākyamuni was and taught in the books of the Orthodox. These were written not less than four hundred years after his death, and are at best the interpretation of his person and teachings by monks who had lost that first contagion of enthusiasm which made his religion a popular movement. That they give one possible interpretation is clear; but even they seem to hesitate whether to content themselves with thinking of him as the "Honoured Elder Brother of the World," supernormal but not supernatural, or to go on and claim for him

the high title of "God among the gods." They themselves, moreover, make it clear that he set forth both in example and in teaching the compassionate ideal of the Bodhisattva, and made great demands upon the faith of his disciples. It is clear that the seeds of moral reformation which he sowed were sown upon Indian soil (Part II), and germinated accordingly; and the Mahāyāna may from this point of view be regarded as a Hinduism purified and reformed. As the plants which germinated upon this pantheistic soil were transplanted to Kashmir, Chinese Turkestan, and the Far East they developed according to these new environments, and the process has of late been vividly brought home to us by the discoveries of the Stein and Pelliot expeditions. In these treasures of early Buddhist art we see graphically how the Indian religion was adapted to suit China and her neighbours; and we realise vividly how great a cultural bond the Mahāyāna formed. This little anthology seeks in a popular way to illustrate some of its great ideals.

In the first few poems we get a glimpse of the pantheistic soil upon which early Buddhism grew, and of some of the authentic teachings of Sākyamuni, which later became the germs of liberal Buddhism; and these in turn are followed by a selection from the lotus-ponds of the Mahāyāna. They represent a notable contribution from

Buddhist scholars to India's long search after Reality.

From the unreal lead me to the Real,
 From darkness to Light,
 From death to Immortality :

this has been Indian's age-long prayer, and the scholars of Mahāyāna claim, like their Master, to have found an answer to it. Whether they define this Goal with him as Nirvāna, as Tathatā or Suchness, as Sūnyatā or the Void, or more theologically as the Dharmakāya, or Body of the Law, and Tathāgatagarbha or Buddha-womb, they all claim to be his followers and to have reached the same ultimate Reality.

Some of the flowers of the lotus here presented blossomed upon Chinese and others upon Japanese soil, but they are all sprung from the authentic parent stock, and the student will find that they are of the same species.

It will be noted how great a part Faith plays in the Mahāyāna (Nos. V, XXII, XXIII), that this Faith did not confine itself to the historic teacher, or even to his glorified manifestation (Nos. I, XLI, XLII), but that it called into being a notable pantheon in which Amitābha, Lord of the Western Paradise, the compassionate Avalokitesvara, and other charming figures provide a satisfaction for hungry human hearts (Nos. III, IV, XII, XVI). They are all sprung from the

it is impossible for us to say that Kalidasa was not living and working in A.D. 450. But, if so, death soon came, for even in the East a poet must be decently dead some years before his work is likely to be alluded to or copied on inscriptions ; and, as we have said, the date of the Mandasor inscription is A.D. 473.

Some accounts of the works of Kalidasa other than the "Cloud-Messenger" may be of interest to the reader.

I

The "Ritu-samhara," literally "Collection of Seasons," rendered more poetically in English "Procession of Seasons," has had its genuineness suspected, but the careful reader cannot fail to recognise the manner of Kalidasa, albeit doubtless the youthful manner. To readers of the "Cloud-Messenger" the description of thunder as the royal drum of the rain would almost carry conviction in itself, and it was only Kalidasa among Indian poets who saw "lightning-banners" in the sky. The poem describes the sensations of lovers in summer, the rainy season, autumn, winter, early spring, and spring, these being the seasons of Kalidasa's home-country, in a manner indubitably his, but lacking perhaps in the sustained distinction of the "Cloud-Messenger."

II

“ *Malavika and Agnimitra* ” is the earliest of Kalidasa’s dramas, and was also written before his powers had ripened. This is evident from the conventional character of the plot, but the prologue, which briefly alludes to the author after the manner of Aristophanes or Ben Jonson, modestly makes it clear that the author has yet his spurs to win.

“ *Stage-director.* The audience has asked us to present at this spring-festival a drama called ‘ *Malavika and Agnimitra* ,’ composed by Kalidasa. Let the music begin.

“ *Assistant.* No, no ! Shall we neglect the works of such illustrious authors as Bhasa, Saumilla, Kaviputra ? Can the audience feel any respect for the work of a modern poet, a Kalidasa ? ”

Kalidasa, however, has looked Time’s leaguer down, and his illustrious predecessors are now known but as names upon his lips.

The play is a conventional one of court-intrigue, of which the central figure is Agnimitra, an historical king of the second century B.C. At the time of the play he is ruling as regent in his father’s lifetime at Vidiśā, the modern “ Bhilsa ,” whose name “ Earth’s corners know ,” as the fairy says to his cloud in the “ Cloud-Messenger .” The fight with the Greek cavalry, victory in which

is the occasion in the play of the horse-sacrifice already mentioned, is a memory of the historical struggle with the Greek dynasty of the Punjab, of which the best-known representative was that Menander who is said by Strabo to have conquered more tribes than Alexander, and who is yet remembered, as Milinda, by the Buddhists, in one of whose sacred books he is a character.

III

“Sakuntala” is of course the work of Kalidasa which is best known in the western world. In that it has more human interest it is bound to have a wider appeal than the purely lyric “Cloud-Messenger,” though the latter, in its narrower scope, may be held to attain greater perfection in every detail. Kalidasa has taken the story from the Mahabharata—that elephantine epic which is many times longer than the Iliad and Odyssey put together, but has made—for better or for worse—many changes in the story. King Dushyanta, out hunting, takes refuge at a woodland hermitage in the absence of the “father.” He falls in love at first sight with the sweet hermit-girl Sakuntala, and marries her by the “voluntary ceremony,” and then returns to his capital. On the day when she is setting out to join him she offends an irascible sage by inattention to him in her loving abstraction, and

incurs his curse : she will not be recognised by her lover. Sakuntala's companion, however, softens him so far that the curse is to be lifted when the lover sees a gem which he has given her for a token. When Sakuntala comes before the king he rejects her in a scene of utter pathos ; he has quite lost his memory of her. After a time the ring he gave her is found by some fishermen, and gradually the idea of Sakuntala comes back to the king, who paints her picture for the clown, who never saw her, and he talks of her with penitence to a nymph sent down from heaven : but it is some years before the inevitable recognition and reunion take place at the hermitage, and then it is through the lion-taming activity of the youthful son of the king and Sakuntala, which proclaims his royal parentage.

Many criticisms of the plot of Sakuntala can be made from the Western point of view, but it is shot through with poetry and love of natural beauty, and the character of Sakuntala is one of the world's " possessions for ever."

IV

"Vikrama-Urvashi," "Urvashi won by Valour," is a play of the love of a mortal king and a heavenly nymph, crossed by curses and marred by magic, but ending perforse, in Kalidasa, happily. Its language is a perpetual echo of

“Sakuntala,” and it is a second-rate work of the poet ; but its plot may be briefly sketched.

King Pururavas rescues the nymph Urvashi from a demon, with the inevitable outcome. She reveals herself to him on earth, but is recalled to heaven to take part in a play. In this, when asked, “On whom is your heart set ?” her heart gives the answer, “On Pururavas,” and she is cursed to fall from heaven, but allowed to live with her lover till he shall see a son born of her. On the honeymoon in the forest, she enters a grove forbidden to women, and becomes a vine. Pururavas appeals to all the creatures of the forest, and recovers Urvashi by the help of the usual gem, a blood-red ruby. In the last act this is carried away by a vulture, which is shot by an arrow marked as belonging to the son of Pururavas and Urvashi, who had lived concealed because of the curse ; finally, however, Urvashi is allowed to live with her husband till his death.

This is a story from the Rig-veda ruined ; but the landscapes of the play are bathed in beauty ; and Kalidasa could not but write poetry, as notably in the appeal to the forest creatures.

The “Line of Raghu” is an epic of the “solar dynasty” of Indian kings, and notably of Rama,

the Bayard of Hindustan, whose ancient and perpetual chronicle is the "Ramayana."

Kalidasa begins by a prologue, in which again he modestly speaks of himself. In the fourth canto we have the progress of Raghu over the length and breadth of India and his conquest of the Indian world, including Persians, Greeks and Hunas. The sixth is comparable with the Belmont scenes of the "Merchant of Venice." The princess Indumati, at her suitor-choosing, passes over kings rich, of ancient lineage and comely, to settle on the Prince Aja, of Raghu's line. The tenth canto tells of the incarnation of Rama, whose victories over foes and demons follow. He is exiled for family reasons from the kingdom that should be his. He falls foul of a giantess whom he scorns, and his faithful wife Sita is snatched away by a giant to his fortress in Ceylon, whence she is rescued by Rama with the help of monkeys. Rama then comes to his throne, but he is compelled to put away Sita, because his people believe that one could not have maintained chastity in the giant's fortress. In the hermitage of Valmiki she brings forth twins, to whom in the after-time the sage teaches "the sweet story of Rama," the "Ramayana." At the horse-sacrifice celebrated by Rama, Sita and her sons are brought forward by Valmiki, and she demonstrates her purity. "If I am faithful, may the Earth swallow me." It lightens,

and she is swallowed up in the embrace of the goddess of Earth. The rest is anti-climax. The poem breaks off with the "Loves of Agnivarna," the voluptuous.

The "Line of Raghu" is an epic of episodes, but what an episode is the tale of Rama ! There is pathos indeed, and throughout there is the glory of Kalidasa's style.

VI

The "Birth of the War-God" opens on the Himalayas, so often hymned by Kalidasa. Parvati, the daughter of the mountain, is the destined bride of Siva, who is engaged in religious austerity. The gods approach Brahma the Creator with a hymn of praise, which might well have inspired the "Brahma" of Emerson. Brahma promises that the son of Siva and Parvati shall conquer the demon Taraka, who is troubling the gods. The Love-god, attempting to subdue Siva, is consumed by fire, and lamented with utter pathos and beauty by his consort. Parvati's constancy is tried by a young Brahman who denigrates Siva, but when she proves faithful the god reveals himself. After the wedding the body of Love is restored. The joys of the honeymoon are described, and the glory of the sunset-glow and the coming on of night shines

in the poetry of Kalidasa. The son Kumara when born fulfils the promise of Brahma, and as a youth leads the gods to victory against the defiant demon Taraka, whom he slays. The "Birth of the War-God" has a unity of interest lacking in the "Line of Raghu," but for the western reader its virtue lies in the moving loveliness of such passages as the lament for Love or the pictures of "sunset and evening star."

Kalidasa, whatever the form of his writing—epic, drama, or lyric—is a true poet, and the same poet. He is essentially a lyric poet, as the nature of poetry is essentially lyrical. He sings of love, happy at the last, and havened after tempest ; he richly paints the Indian scene, the Indian year. His style, they say, is artificial, and in truth no man could ever speak in the way in which this man writes ; but his imagination is gorgeous, and his love of nature intimate : for this, though his sins of involution were scarlet, they shall be as wool.

Men in India have debated where Kalidasa was born, and of what mother ; but for us it is sufficient that he was born, like all poets, in Heaven, and drank the milk of Paradise before he came to earth, in Hindustan.

I ought to state that this translation of the "Cloud-Messenger" is made from Dr. Hultzsch's edition, published by the Royal Asiatic Society :

this I have attempted to follow faithfully except that at Stanza LXVIII, line 4, the variant निषुणा for निषुण, and at Stanza LXXXV, line 4, विषमाद्° for विषमद्° appeared to make infinitely better sense.

I must also acknowledge my indebtedness in the preparation of this introduction firstly to Prof. A. B. Keith's *Sanskrit Drama* and *History of Sanskrit Literature*, works of consummate scholarship; also to Mr. Vincent Smith's *Early History of India*, particularly for the matter from Fa-hien; and to Prof. Ryder's *Kalidasa* in Everyman's Series, which contains translations of "Sakuntala" and the "Cloud-Messenger," and summaries and extracts from the other works. Various Indian editions, both of the "Cloud-Messenger" and other works, have also been consulted.

Finally, I have to thank sincerely and profoundly my old Sanskrit teacher Prof. A. A. Macdonell for the kind and scholarly encouragement he gave to the work when I began it as his pupil at Oxford many years ago, encouragement without which it would never have been undertaken; Mr. L. Cranmer-Byng, the Editor of this series, but for whose fostering care the torso of the MS. would not have been finished; and also Prof. F. W. Thomas for his generosity and eagle-eyed patience in going over the completed

INTRODUCTION

work. But though the translation has had at different stages the advantage of supervision by two successive Boden Professors of Sanskrit in the University of Oxford, they are in no way responsible for any errors of rendering that may be detected by the critic.

I may say that I have in general omitted diacritical marks in writing this introduction, as a piece of English prose: but have employed them in the translation where the sound of certain letters matters to the rhythm; while certain words in the text are referred to in the introduction.

CHARLES KING.

BARNES, S.W.
1930.

THE CLOUD-MESSENGER

AN INDIAN LOVE LYRIC

I

A FAY there was that of his office failed. Came sunset of his glory at the cursing of his lord, a galling curse that reft him from his love, and must a year be brooked. Sojourn made he in the hermitages of Rama-peak, whose pools are by Sita's bathings sanctified, whose trees with shade are rich.

II

Many a month on yonder mountain that sponse-sundered lover spent ; bare his arm where slipped the golden bracelet ; when lo ! a cloud, the peak embracing, on the dying day of June, lovely as an elephant that butts athwart at a nound a-gambol.

III

As best might be, he faced the cloud, whence is ketaka conceived ; long time he dammed his tears, the henchman of the King of Kings, and

pondered. At the time of cloud-appearing e'en the happy heart is troubled ; when one that longs for neck embraces is afar, how shall it be ?

IV

Eager he his lady's life to buttress, and, at onset of July, by the cloud he would send tidings of his weal ; to it with blooms of kutaja fresh-blown he made oblation, and exultant uttered welcome in a voice of kindly tone.

Massed radiance and vapour, wind and water, is a cloud ; meet a message is for mortals dowered with lively sense to bear ; what hath a cloud therewith to do ? Aye, but so the yearning fairy reckoned not, and made his plea ; for the love-lorn in their longing are distraught and may not mark souled creatures from unsouled.

VI

Thy lineage I know, from the race o'er earth renowned, yea, the very Ruin-Clouds, O High God's minister Protean ; wherefore I the fashion of thy suppliant have ta'en, whose kin by fate are far. Better pray in vain to Virtue than of Dullness win desire.

VII

Of searèd souls the ark thou art ; so my message carry, cloud. I am sundered from my lady by the Lord of riches' wrath. To the dwelling thou must fare of the kings of faëry ; Alakā it hight, with its mansions laved in light, from the moon on Siva's head, in the outer gardens set.

VIII

Thou shalt scale the sky's savannah ; then with curls afloat in air, the travellers' wives shall see thee and shall breathe with faith anew. When thou art girt, who would forget the ladies sighing lorn ? With his hap in other's hand, were not any man as I ?

IX

Carcess this lofty crag, and say, "Good bye dear friend." His slopes are printed with the feet of Raghu's lord, for men's devotion meet ; season by season is his love made manifest by consummation with thee ; and then he sheds a burning tear of long severance the fruit.

X

The breeze sets fair, and slow, ah ! slow it wafts thee. Upon thy left hand sweetly sings yon rainbird thirsting for the showers ; and now the enringed she-cranes, whose wombs the

breeding time know well, shall be thy beauty's handmaidens in heaven.

XI

Now nought shall stay thy going ; her shalt thou surely see, thy brother's chaste wife, breathing yet, and rapt in reckoning of the days ; for the bond of hope most oft in severance sustains the flower-like loving heart of women, that droopeth suddenly.

XII

With plantain-flowers thy thunder the fruitful earth can clothe ; the royal swans shall hear it sweet upon the ear. Mānasa-wards they sigh their souls and carry for the way fragments of young lotus-fibre ; far as Kailāsa they shall fly, thy fellow-pilgrims of the pole.

XIII

The way I will tell over for thy faring fit, and hearken thou the while. Then, cloud, my message thou shalt hear, and shalt drink it with thine ear ; this way thou shalt go and anon shalt weary grow ; then stay thy foot upon the peaked mountains ; and quaff when thou dost fade, ah fade, the crystal water of the streams.

XIV

The simple women of the saints of God with upturned face shall see thy sweeping and in utter terror say "Surely the wind the crag's crest reaveth." From tarrying here where the fresh canes grow soar skywards with thy face set north ; pass in thy path the elephants that guard the bournes of Earth ; let them not with their massy trunks enfold thee.

XV

A fragment of the Breaker's bow issues from an anthill-top in the east, and lovely is it as the blended rays of gems ; whence thy sable shape shall win beauty passing Beauty's self, as Vishnu's in a cowherd's garb from peacock's plume of flashing sheen.

XVI

Mount thou the field of Māla that share-cleft is newly sweet ; a sight thou shalt be that is drunk by the countrywomen's eyes that love makes lovely, and that know not the coy play of the brows. "On thee doth rest," they say, "the fruit of ploughing." Swerve westwards in thy going and yet again to north.

XVII

With thy torrents thou shalt quell the conflagrations of the forest, and then, when unto weariness of faring thou hast fared, the crested Mango-peak upon his head shall duly bear thee. When a friend is come for refuge, e'en the churl will think on kindness done in days that are no more, nor will he turn his face away ; how much less one so high ? 6,831.

XVIII

The mountain-peak is mantled all about with mango-coverts with ripe fruit a-glisten. Coloured as a comely tress thou shalt soar on high. Now the peak shall worthy wax the seeling of the mates immortal, with nipple black as breast of Earth, else paly over all.

XIX

Its bowers delight the woodmen's wives. Tarry thou there a little space ; shed thy showers and thereafter voyage on with fleeter pace. Revā shalt see at Vindhya foot meandering stone-studded, as 'twere a streaked tracery on frame of elephant.

XX

When thy rain is belched forth, of her liquor thou shalt drink ; with the fragrant rut 'tis

robed of the forest elephant ; matted rose-apple-trees its current stay ; then hie thee on. When thou, O airy pack, art water all within, there is no wind may waft thee ; for light are all things void ; 'tis fullness that hath weight.

XXI

The speckle-coats shall see the kadamba flower, all yellow and brown, with infant stems, and the plantain trees in the marshland whose firstling buds peep forth. Earth's savour they shall smell too, that is sweet, most sweet, with the scent of forests burnt ; and they thy track shall trace by the raindrops thou shalt shed.

XXII

Though thou wouldest journey swiftly for the sake of her I love, thou wilt dally, I foresee it, friend of mine, on this mountain, on that mountain, that with kutaja flowers is sweet. Thy welcome shall be cried by the peacocks dewy-eyed ; may it be thy will, so hailed, as thou mayest to go apace.

XXIII

At thine approach Daśarna's garden-hedges shall be white-amiced all with ketaka, whose buds their lips are opening ; the holy fig-trees

of its villages shall live with the nest-building of the crows that on the house-oblation feed. Black with ripe fruit its rose-apple woodlands ; there the wild swans shall for a season bide.

XXIV

To its king-town go, whose name Earth's corners know, yea Vidiśā ; loving's consummation straightway thou shalt win ; Vetravati's dancing billowed dainty water thou shalt quaff, sweet with thy thunderings the bank anigh, as 'twere a frowning face.

XXV

Mayest thou there for recreation take upon the peak thy station, that men dub the Dwarf. At thy touching he shall thrill with kadamba blooming full ; he it is that prophesies of towns-men's leashless revelries, in the caves whence the waves of love-perfume of harlots come.

XXVI

Out of repose, Sir, onward fare. Sprinkle with fresh rainy drops the jasmine-stars of many a copse, the stars that spring along the side where the woodland waters glide. Casting shade thou shalt be made for a moment intimate with the faces of the flower-gathering girls ; faded in

their ear the blue lotus doth appear, stricken in
wiping the sweat from off their cheeks.

XXVII

Though thwart thy path should be, since thy
course is set due northward, shun not, pray, to
survey Ujjain's palace balconies. An there thy
heart is warmed not by glances of the town-
girls' eyes, that quiver and that shiver at the
lightning's forked flash, thou art cheated of life's
crown.

XXVIII

The serried birds that chatter at the rippling
of the waves Nirvindhya hath for girdle string.
Sweetly she stealeth where she stumbleth ; her
navel is of eddies manifest. In thy going learn
her love and mingle with her ; for women's first
word of love to lovers is a gesture amorous.

XXIX

When thou yon stream hast overpast, O !
slender as a tress her flood is grown. Her hue
the ghostly leaves make pale, that the trees shed
growing at the water-side. Thy bliss, O blessed
one, she blazons by her love-lorn plight ; how
her leanness she may leave thine it is to compass.

XXX

When thou hast won Avanti, where versed
the village cronies in Udayana's tale, make for
the city that I told thee of, the Spacious, rich
in treasure. Earth hath not its fellow ; 'tis as
a fragment fair of heaven. Saints, with their
fruit of merit all but spent, came to the earth
and brought it hither by their pieties remaining.

XXXI

Coo, coo, coo—so shrill and passion-sweet the
cranes are crooning, oft as day breaks, in the
breeze from Sipra setting there. Sweet is it
with the scent's caress of lotus blooms a-blow-
ing ; and it beareth away for the ladies love's
dear weariness, kissing their limbs as a lover,
courtly in craving a boon.

XXXII

Fat feeds thy frame on the fumes of the hair-
tending that from the lattice trail ; homage thou
hast of the peacocks of the home, that make
offering of a dance in love fraternal. When thy
soul is way-worn throughly, for a night thou
shalt in her palaces abide, flower-fragrant,
crimson-dappled from laughing beauties' feet.

XXXIII

In awe shall Siva's chivalry behold thee.
"Lo ! 'tis the hue of our lord's own neck."
Hie thec to the holy shrine of the Prince of Wrath,
the three worlds' master ; there toss the groves
in Gandhavati's breezes, perfumed with pollen
of the lotus blue and sweet with the bathings of
jolly maidens in the waves a-gambol.

XXXIV

Though Mahākāla thou at other time shalt
win, O thou that bringest rain, tarry until the
sun outrange thy seeing ; for a tabor thou shalt
serve at the Lancer's offering at eventide, and
men must laud thee ; the perfect guerdon shalt
be thine of thy deep thunderings.

XXXV

The dancers' girdles tinkle with their dancing,
and their hands are wearied out as they wave in
sport their fans whose handles gleam with rays
of gems. When on their nail-marks thou dost
shed the first refreshing drops of rain, they will
cast on thee side-glances long as rows of honey-
bees.

XXXVI

Upraised are Siva's arms as tree-forest. Do
thou clasp them in thy crescent. Deck thee

with the sunset's glory, crimson as the Eastern rose that virgin blows. Quench thou the Lord of cattle's longing for wet hide of elephant at the leading of the dance ; Bhavāni shall thy worship watch, her eyes unquivering, her fear quelled.

XXXVII

There, where by night the maidens fare to the dwelling of their lovers, on the king's highway the sight is stayed by darkness that a bodkin pierceth. Show them the path with a lightning flash that is bright as sheen of gold on a touch-stone. Shed thou no water ; thunder not ; be silent still ; for timid they.

XXXVIII

Tarry that night upon some mansion-gable where the turtle doves do sleep, O thou whose spouse the lightning is awearied of long play. At sight of sun, ride on, Sire, till thy way be done. For they dally not a moment who do tasks of trust for friends.

XXXIX

Then the tears of love-lorn maidens must be stayed and wiped by lovers ; wherefore leave the sun's path soon. When he turneth him again to wipe the dew tears from the lily's lotus-

face, an his rays thou lettest, at thee shall he
chafe and his chafing shall be sore.

XL

Yea ! Yea ! thy mirrored self, by nature
lovely, shall win entrance to the water of the
stream of the Abyss, as to a soul of grace. So
thou oughtest not, flint-hearted, her glances to
make bootless, that are white as water-lilies,
that are dartings of live fish.

XLI

Her water-robe of blue thou shalt be reaving,
tucked lightly in her hand. The cane-boughs
that has won ; it has left the hip-like banks.
Thou shalt part, though loth thy parting, as
thou trailest down, O friend ; loth, for who
that knows the sweetness may resign a body
bared ?

XLII

Earth at thy showers retakes her breath ;
The chill breeze, pure from her perfume's kiss,
The forest fig-trees ripeneth.
As it is drunk
By the elephant's trunk
It rumbleth sweet at the orifice.
Soft shall it blow,

When 'tis thy will
 Unto the hill,
 Called God's, to go.

XLIII

There Skanda stablished his abode. Do thou, thy form a cloud of flowers, drench him with thy blossom-showers, wet with heavenly Ganges' flood. He, that doth bear the infant moon, in the fire's mouth brought forth that glory brighter than the sun, for a bulwark unto the hosts of heaven.

XLIV

Then loud shall be thy thundering
 When to the mountain thou dost cling.
 The Firc-born's peacock set to dance,
 His eye-balls bathed in radiance
 Of Siva's moon ; his fallen plume,
 That lines of light enring
 (Because her son is dear)
 Bhavāni setteth in the room
 Of lotus in her ear.

XLV

So shall be thine adoration of the god reed-thicket-born ; then voyage on. The luted pairs

of Saints, rain-shy, thy path shall shun. Droop
in homage to the glory

of Rantideva, sprung from slaughter
of the Lady Lovely's daughter,
to the form of flowing water
on the earth translated.

XLVI

When thou dost stoop, thy thirst to slake,
Thieving the Sarnga-bearer's hue,
Distance shall the current make
Of that stream—though broad it be—
In eyes of them that haunt the blue,
Slender, as they strain to see ;
As 'twere the peerless, pearléd,
Mid-sapphire-swelling necklace of the world.

XLVII

Pass o'er it and fare on, thine orbed self,
the cynosure of the Daśapura women's eyes.
Creepers are their brows, and well the play there-
of they know. Black and speckled those brows' splendour, as each upward flashes, with archery
of lashes ; they steal the beauty of the bees that
through the blowing jasmine go.

XLVIII

Plunge down with thy shadow to the region of the Holy Land. Win that meadow of the Kurus, that the warriors' fray betrayeth, wherein Gandhiva's Bowman rained many a hundred of sharp arrows on the face of fighting men, as thou on lotus' face thy showers.

XLIX

Hie thee, honey, to the waters of Sarasvati, haunted erstwhile by the hero that for banner bare the plough. He, for that he loved his kins-folk, turned his visage from the fray and left the liquor sweet of savour marked with eyes of Revati. Black in hue alone thereafter, but in heart most pure shalt be.

L

May thy going be therefrom, by Kanakhala, to Jahnu's daughter from the king of crags descended. Hers the flight of stairs from heaven made by sons of Sagara. On a time, with foamy laughter—at the frown that formed on Gauri's face—Siva's hair she grasped amain, clinging to the moon wave-handed.

LI

If, like the elephant immortal, thy forepart in the heaven hung, thou shouldst think to quaff

her flood, thwart and lucent as clear crystal, when thy sudden shadow, Sire, glides her stream to meet, no less lovely she should be than at joining made with Jumna at a place no god ordained.

LII

Yea ! the alp with winter hoary, whence she welleth thou shalt win. Odorous wax its boulders with musk-scent of squatting deer. Settling on its pinnacle that reaves way-weariness, thou shalt deck thee in a sheen desirable, meet to be likened unto mud churned by the bull of the three-eyed god.

LIII

If forest-fire at wind's breath waste it, of brushing of pine-branches born, kindling the massed yak-tails meteor-wise, with multitude of mighty waters thine the task to quench that throughgly. For the wealth of Nobleness hath fruit in peace of Sorrow's pain.

LIV

The unicorns thy voice of thunder will not brook, and to their bodies' ruin, they in insolence shall leap on high at theo whom none may o'erleap. Them thou shouldst bespatter with

thy laughter of thick hail-showers. Who would not be a butt for scorn, whose strivings are but labour lost ?

LV

There, in worship bowed, thou shouldest circle, on the rock made manifest, the Crescent-crested's footmark, served by Saints with offerings ever ; after sight whereof, believers, when this mortal frame is dust, their transgressions shed away, worthy wax to win his angeldom perpetual.

LVI

Sweetly sing the breeze-filled bamboos. The conquest of the triple citadel is by the passionate she-centaurs chanted. If thy thunder in the grottoes like a pealing drum should be, shall not there the orchestra of the Beasts' Lord be fulfilled ?

LVII

Thou shalt pass, upon the hoar peak's slope, those wondrous wonders, the wild swan's gate, Prometheus' path to glory, that is Mount Curlew's cleft. Thereby thou shouldest hie thee to the quarter of the north, comely in thy thwart expanse as the sable foot of Vishnu bent on vanquishing Bali.

LVIII

Thereafter in thy going the guest thou shouldest be of Kailāsa, the joinings of whose highlands are rent by Typhon's arm, the mount that is the mirror of the nymphs celestial ; it abideth, filling heaven with its white lilyed pinnacles, as't were the Three-eyed's laughter in mass made manifest.

LIX

When thou its slope hast won, as lustrous eye-salve gleaming, presage have I of that mountain's beauty, that is fair as a fragment freshly cut from tooth of the twy-tusked. Worthy shall that beauty be of sight with eye unwinking— as when o'er Ploughbearer's shoulders is his cerule amice thrown.

LX

Siva, may be, will doff his dark snake-bracelet, and his hand will proffer ; Gauri then should promenade, foot-faring on the hill of pleasure. Fashion thy body zig-zag, that hath water choked within ; and do the office of her stairway, touched by a comely foot a-climbing.

LXI

Then from thee shall issue water-floods ; and heaven's houris entering, surely shall make thee

a shower-bath-chamber. If thou from them, friend, hast no refuge, when thou hast won to summer, thou shouldst awe them full of frolic with growls that grate the ear.

LXII

Mānasa's water thou shouldst lap, whence the golden lotus springs ; and the High God's elephant at thy whim shouldst gladden with a momentary veil. Thou with showery winds shouldst shake the mantle of the wishing tree ; so thou shouldst joy, twin-imaged, in yon crystal-lucent mount.

LXIII

Again thou shalt see, and again shalt surely know, as thou farest at thy will, Alakā, with Ganges-girdle loosed, as on a lover's lap ; who, palace crowned in season beareth thee, a rainy cloud-mass, as a loving maid a curl, with a row of pearls inwrought.

LXIV

Here and here the mansions there may match thee. Thou hast lightning, they sweet women. With thee God's bow, with them are pictures. Their drums are beaten for a concert ; dear and deep thy thundering. Water within thou hast,

but gemmy floors are theirs. Thou art on high ;
their summits kiss the clouds.

LXV

In the women's hands there are lotuses for sport ; their curls are with young jasmine wreathed ; by the lodhra-blossom's pollen the beauty of their faces is to whiteness wrought ; in the tuft of their hair is the new, the crimson amaranth ; in their ear the bright acacia bloom ; in the parting of their tresses kadamba-flower is of thine approach begotten.

LXVI

Thereat the faery-folk resort, to the palace-terraces crystal-paven, arrayed with flowers star-mirroring, and with fair maidens round them quaff the wine whose fruit is love, distillèd from the wishing tree, while are drum-skins softly beaten, whose thunder's deep as thine.

LXVII

There moonstones hang from corded lattices ; moonrays melt them, shining clear at thy departing that didst stay them ; the moonstones then are oozing translucent water-drops and are banishing the languor love brings to women's limbs, when their darlings' arms no more embrace them and they breathe again.

LXVIII

There clouds like thee are guided by the wind,
that never still is to the topmost chambers of
the palaces. The paintings with new water-drops
they mar, and suddenly, as 'twere with fear a-
quiver, by magic skilled to mimic belched smoke,
they fade and flee away.

LXIX

The faery women's gowns are loose with their
girdle knots unclasped. Love makes their darlings
wanton-handed and they take the gowns away ;
mazed with shame the women shake a handful's
powder ; it wins the jewel lamps high blazing,
but it booteth not at all.

LXX

The nightly path of loving women is traced
against the sunrise there by coral flowers that
fluttered from their curls when walking shook
them ; by golden lotuses trimly-pared that
slipped from off their ears ; yea, and by neck-
laces whose string is severed, fragrant from
bosoms hung with pearls.

LXXI

When Love's King doth mark the god that is
the friend of Mammon there abiding visibly,

falls within the house, and hath a little little lustre like to the flashing of a line of fireflies.

LXXIX

Slender the damsel, ripe-cherry-lipped, and eyed like the shy gazelle ; sharp-toothed is she, waist-worn and deep of navel ; slow-faring, heavy-hipped, for her twin breasts stooping. Surely her among all maidens God made first in Paradise.

LXXX

There she is and thou mayest know her ; few her words ; my second life is she. When I her spouse am far away she liveth like the turtle-dove ; in utter yearning go the days, on heavy feet withal. The maiden hath become, I ween, a lotus winter-blighted, bewitched and all forlorn.

LXXXI

Now are her eyes with sorrow's surfeit swollen ; in the heat of many sighs her under-lip hath lost its hue ; her face upon her hand is pillow'd, half-hidden by her pendant curls ; the woe it weareth of the moon whose sheen at thine approach is shed.

LXXXII

She shall enter thine eyes' orbit in sacrificing rapt ; or else my likeness limning, fancy-spun, from severance slender ; or asking of the sweet-voiced love-bird, in its cage abiding, " Dost thou remember, dear, our lord, for thou his sweeting wert ? "

LXXXIII

Maybe, honey, in her lap grey-garmented her lute she sets ; her love is a lay to carol, wrought with art—my name for chorus ; as best may be she strikes the tear-dewed strings ; but again, again, forgets the melody, albeit of her own making.

LXXXIV

Perchance with flowers athwart the threshold flung she marketh one by one upon the floor the months abiding of that age that dates from my departing day ; or she savours love's communion in the shrine of memory ; ladies from their dear ones sundered banish desolation so.

LXXXV

On the prime day of parting she reft the wreath that crowned her, and a single braid she bound ; which when the curse shall end, and sorrow flee away, mine to unloose shall be ; touching it is

pain, for it is hard and rough ; but oft she stirs it from the curve of her cheek with hand whose nails are trimmed not.

LXXXVI

So may she busy be by day, and severance should irk her not ; but at night thy friend, I ween, hath heavier grief nor any consolation. So, to glad her with my message come at midnight nigh where upon the ground she coucheth, loverless, unsleeping, and at the casement stand and watch.

LXXXVII

Woe-worn thou'l see her, one side stretched upon the couch where she lies lone, as, on the horizon eastward, the cold moon's form to a mere fragment dwindled. Her yearning is for union with me—how it may befall albeit sleep-begotten ; but tears in torrents stay the coming of the slumber she desires.

LXXXVIII

The curl unattended, washed with water only, that hangeth now unto her cheek, she scatters with a sigh that sears the bud that is her lower lip. Night, that in love's sweet society with me passed as the twinkling of an eye, she wastes

with burning tears that flood her couch of loneliness.

LXXXIX

Upon the moonbeams, nectar-like and cool,
that through the lattice entrance make, her eye
with old delight doth dwell, then turns aside.
She veils it with those lashes laden with her
sorrow's freight of tears, as on a cloudy day the
lowly lotus wakes not neither sleeps.

LXC

I know that lady's mind doth dote on me ;
therefore I count her suffering so at our first
sundering. No braggart I ; no heady dream of
blessedness elates me ; all, all, that I have uttered,
brother, swift Time to thee shall manifest.

LXCI

Strengthless is she ; hard, hard, it is to bear,
her body frail and stripped of gauds upon the
couch-top set. Surely she shall make thee shed
a tear of fresh rain fashioned ; souls all soft
within most oft will pity on their pilgrimage.

XCII

Her curls hinder her side-glances and she hath
no eye-salve more for her anointing ; for lack
of wine her eyes forget the coy play of the brows

at thine approach, my fancy 'tis, they shall quiver, quiver, upwards ; those gazelle-eyes, they shall be beautiful as the water-lily with flickering fish athrob.

XCIII

Or her left thigh shall thrill, that from my finger-nail marks now is free, that hath by destiny's decree shed the pearl-strings once familiar ; thigh that at love's consummating knew my hands' caresses well ; fair is it as fresh plantain-stem.

XCIV

If, O water-giver, at that season, my lady hath on sleep laid hold, settle at her side and wait a night watch's space ; turn thy face from thundering. When she hath in slumber's fancy clasped me her spouse, let there be no sudden slipping of the knot of that embrace, wherein her creeper-arms twine close about my neck.

XCV

Wake her with the young-eyed starry jasmine, by a breeze that its own water-drops make cool ; refreshèd she shall fix her eyes on the ox-eyed window big with lightning, that thou

guardest. With a voice of sober thunder first address her in her pride.

XCVI

“No widow thou ; lo ! know me for thy lord’s dear friend, with water freighted ; to thy company am I come to bring his message treasured in my mind ; I that with my sweet slow thunder set a-scurry troops of roamers weary in their voyaging, troops that are thirsty to set free the braids of their frail wives.”

XCVII

So shalt thou speak and she shall gaze and greet thee, her face upturned as Sita’s to the wind’s son, while heaves her yearning heart ; thee thereafter, honey, she shall hear with all her soul ; for women—the trim-tressèd—tidings from a friend’s mouth of their love scarce are less than loving union.

XCVIII

So reverend sire, mayest thou address her, at my bespeaking, for thine own self’s service, “Thy comrade lingers in the hermitages of Rama’s peak ; high heaven hath spared him ; he would know thy weal, O wife, in his loneliness ; mortals, for whom death standeth at the door, must ever wish for welfare first.

XCIX

Thy frame is worn and seared, and deeply
seared is his ; his bed is companied with tears,
as thine doth run there with ; ceaseless thy
yearning, he is yearning too ; hotly thou sighest ;
deep his sighs and long ; far away he sojourneth ;
his way by fate the foe is barred ; but in the
world of spirit his body enters thine.

C

A saying meet, yea meet, for open utterance
to thee, before thy fair companions he was fain
to tell over in thine ear, for he loved to touch
thy face. He has o'erpassed the hearing of the
ear, and to the eye is inaccessible. Now by my
mouth he speaks to thee in words of passion's
patterning,—

CI

‘ Thy limbs in creepers I descry, thy glance in
gaze of shy gazelle, and in the moon the blooming
of thy cheek ; thy tresses in the peacocks'
swelling fans ; thy brows' play in the river's
little ripples ; nowhere, O timid one, alas ! thine
image standeth whole.

CII

When I have limned thee, wroth for love's
sake, with crimson chalks upon the crag, and

next myself would fashion fallen at thy feet,
then my sight is bleared with tears that well
perpetually. Ah ! cruel fate forbids that we
should mingle there.

CIII

In slumber's visions, good my wife, howe'er it
be, I clasp thee ; to hug thee fast I fling my
arms in air. The deities there dwelling descry
me of a surety, and on the tree-shoots patter
their tear-drops big as pearls.

CIV

The southward-setting breezes that from the
snow-peak blow, cleave now the clusters of the
pine-tree-branches ; with that sap's flowing
they are fragrant. To them I cling, O virtuous
lady. " Maybe in the aforetime they touched
thy form " my prayer.

CV

Long the nights linger, their three watches
through. How might they be contracted to
a span. How might the day's heat at all seasons
gently, O so gently, burn ? So, O thou the
quivering-eyed, my heart's desire is hard to
win ; shelterless the heart doth wax against the
scorching anguish of severance from thee.

CVI

O'er and o'er I ponder, and on myself myself
in sooth sustain ; so do not thou, my darling, let
faint-heartedness o'ercome thee. Who hath
perpetual bliss for portion and who hath perfect
woe ? With motion as of wheel-felly life fares
up and life fares down.

CVII

When he that holds the Sarnga-bow rises from
his serpent-bed, my curse its ending hath ; close
thine eyes tight, and tarry four months yet ;
then shall we twain in harvest-moonèd nights
fulfil our soul's desire that in severance grew
great.'"

CVIII

And say this too ; " ' Of yore when on our
couch asleep my neck thou claspedst, thou didst
wake and cry aloud, I know not why ; oft did
I ask ; thou didst answer secret—smiling " In
sleep, O rogue, I saw thee with a lady making
love."

CIX

Know as I give this token that I am safe and
hale, and let no slander, dark-eyed dear, arouse

ill thoughts of me. They say that love in parting wanes, I know not how it be, for yearning for the heart's desire feeds on absence ; higher, higher, so love doth grow.'"

CX

I trust, sweet friend, thy mind is set that task of mine to do. O not at all I count thy silence "No." Mutely thou revealest rain at the cuckoo's prayer ; the good man's answer to a suitor is to grant the boon implored.

CXI

For friendship's sake or else at sight of tribulation, from thy heart's compassion this my supplication do, albeit my course in asking thee is quaint ; then roam what regions, cloud, thou wilt, thy beauty by the rainy season made more beautiful ; and mayest thou not miss thy love the lightning, for the twinkling of an eye.

NOTES

I. His lord was Kubera, god of wealth.

Rama-peak: the hill Ramagarh in Sirguja State, Central Provinces. Here Rama and Sita sojourned during their exile (see Introduction).

III. Ketaka: flower of the Nala-tree, *Pandanus odoratissimus*.

IV. Kutaja: the tree *Wrightia antidyserterica*.

VII. Alakā is purely mythical, but the god of wealth was associated with Kashmir and the Himalayan country. Cf. "Line of Raghu," Canto IV.

IX. Raghu's lord: Rama (see Introduction).

XII. Mānasa: the holy lake of the Tibetans, near Kailāsa.

Kailāsa, a Himalayan peak (20,226 ft.), in Tibet: called "ice-jewel" in Tibetan.

XV. The Breaker: Indra, the chief of the gods.

XVI. Māla: possibly Māldā, near Ratanpur, Central Provinces.

XVII. Mango-peak: Mt. Amarakantaka (3,498 ft.) in Rewa, Central India.

XIX. Revā: R. Nerbudda.

XXI. Kadamba: the orange-blossomed tree *Nauclea Cadamba*.

XXIII. Daśarna: Eastern Mālvā, the country north of Indore; capital Vidiśā, now Bhilsa.

XXIV. Vetravati: R. Betwa in Mālvā.

XXV. The Dwarf: a hill, Udayagiri, near Bhilsa.

XXVIII. Nirvinahya: the river Pārvati in Mālvā.

XXX. Avanti: Western Mālvā, capital Ujjain (see Introduction).

XXX. Udayana was a lover of whom a princess of Ujjain became enamoured on seeing him in a dream. She let him know and he carried her off. The tale is in the Kathasaritsagara the "Ocean of the Streams of Story."

XXXI. Sipra: the river of Ujjain.

XXXIII. *Gandhavati* : a river in Mālvā.

XXXIV. *Mahākāla* : the famous shrine of Śiva the Lancer at Ujjain.

The lord of cattle is Śiva.

XL. The stream of the Abyss : a river in Mālvā.

XLII. The hill called God's is *Devagara*, in Mālvā, between Ujjain and Daśapura (Mandasor).

XLIII. *Skanda*, or *Kumara* : the war-god, begotten by Śiva in fire.

XLIV. *Bhavāni*. *Parvati* : the wife of Śiva and mother of *Skanda* (see Introduction).

XLV. *Rantideva* was a king of Daśapura who showed his piety by sacrificing many cows. The cow is called "Lady Lovely's daughter," from the Divine Cow which had that name. The river in question is the modern Chambal.

XLVI. The bearer of the Sarnga-bow is Vishnu.

XLVIII. Holy Land : north-east of Delhi.

The meadow of the Kurus is south-east of Thaneshwar, near Delhi, in United Provinces.

The Kurus were warriors who fought in the battles of the Mahabharata.

The bow *Gandhiva* was wielded by Arjuna.

XLIX. The holy river *Sarasvati* rises from the southern Himalayas, flows near Thaneshwar, and is lost in the desert.

Balarana, the plough-bannered hero, was sent to perform ablutions in the *Sarasvati* for killing a charioteer ; he had relations on both sides in the epic battles. The wine to which he was used is said to be marked by the eyes of his wife *Revati*, because she shared his revels.

L. Mt. *Kanakhala* : a place of pilgrimage near Haridvara, United Provinces.

Jahnu's daughter : the *Ganges*, which descends from the Himalaya, near Mt. *Kanakhala*. The sacred river is supposed to have been brought down from heaven by a descendant of *Sagara* by way of purification for sins of his ancestors.

Gauri : *Parvati*.

LV. The Crescent-crested : Śiva. A hill at Haridvara is called the foot of Śiva.

LVI. The triple citadel was a domain of a demon reduced to ashes by Śiva.

LVII. The gap in Mt. *Kranūcha*, Curlew, was made by

Parasurama, chief of the Bhrigus, who brought fire to men, whom we therefore here call Prometheus.

LVIII. Ravana, a ten-headed demon conquered by Rama, is here called Typhon, whom he resembles in the tales told of him.

LX. The hill of pleasure is Mt. Kailāsa.

LXXI. The god that is the friend of Mammon is Śiva. The god of Love is afraid of him because Śiva once caused him to be consumed (*see* "Birth of the War-God").

LXXV. The aśoka tree, *Jonesia Asoka*, with orange and scarlet blossoms, is supposed to bloom on being kicked by a woman with her left foot; the kesara, or bakula, *Mimusops Elengi* when it is sprinkled with wine from a woman's mouth.

XCVII. The wind's son is Hanumat, the valiant monkey who brought a message to Sita when she was in the giant's citadel (*see* Introduction).



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